

Good Practice in Practice Educator Quality Assurance



Background to this document

Ensuring that students experience high-quality placements which prepare them for local authority practice is one of the Department for Education's (DfE) performance objectives for funded Teaching Partnerships. In addition, DfE specify that students should have 'high-quality' practice educators who are supported in their professional development. Teaching partnerships have to report on the quality of placements as determined by students in their QAPL feedback or through internal quality assurance.

Quality assurance of placements and practice educators is a key priority for our teaching partnership. Several employers and HEIs are developing their own systems to assure the quality of placements and practice educators as part of a Practice Education Strategy. Recognising the strength in collaboration and sharing good practice and approaches, it was proposed that a whole Teaching Partnership approach to assuring quality of Practice Educators should be developed. A practice educator quality assurance framework or approach could make a positive contribution to raising the professional status of practice educators and contributing to developing, retaining and valuing experienced practice educators. A Task and Finish Group was established to draft a document for consideration by the Practice Educator Strategy Working Group.

This document proposes principles and a framework for a Partnership Quality Assurance approach with associated templates and resources. It is separated into sections: A. Ensuring Ongoing Capability, B. Maintaining Currency and C. Regaining Currency

The intention is that practice educators see this as a constructive and positive development which promotes their status and value in a similar way to AHMPs and other specialist practitioners.

The framework can apply to placements in the private, voluntary and independent sector as well as those within local authorities and trusts.

Additional linked documents provide guidance on maintaining and regaining currency as a practice educator, all guidance has been informed by the BASW 2022 Practice Educator Professional Standards (PEPS) Refresh.

Annex A provides information on the variation between the 2019 and 2022 PEPS.

A. Ensuring ongoing capability

(evidence of practice educators' ability to perform the role effectively over a period of time)

Principles

1. All local authorities and Trusts and HEIs within the WMSWTP should have a quality assurance framework for practice educators which outlines the process for determining the ongoing capability of all active practice educators whatever their level of experience.
2. The quality assurance framework adopted by each organisation will be both pragmatic/realistic and aspirational. It will reflect the current resources available and therefore can be implemented within the organisation reasonably quickly whilst being focused on improvement. As such, for efficiency, it can be incorporated within and complement existing professional review and improvement systems.
3. Each organisation will set timescales to review practice educator capability, it is suggested that this should be at least every two years.
4. The organisation (Employer or HEI) will aim to nominate a designated Practice Educator Quality Assurance (PEQA) lead responsible for implementing, operating and reviewing the PE quality assurance framework. Ideally the PEQA lead is operating at the Practice Mentor/ Practice Assessor level (i.e. PE stage 2 qualified and having supported at least 5 learners at both pre and post qualifying levels).
5. Current national quality assurance tools recommended by Social Work England for determining the quality of placement e.g. QAPL and HEI QA processes will be fully utilized as detailed below:
 - a. QAPL feedback from students regarding their placement should **always** be sent to both the relevant practice educator (off site or onsite) and the designated PE QA lead. The feedback should support the practice educator with their professional development as well as contributing to the QA process.
 - b. In addition, PEs and the PEQA lead should **always** receive feedback if a PE's report is reviewed by a standardization or Practice Assessment Panel.

The PEQA lead or an experienced practice educator should be available to discuss the feedback with the practice educator if required and recognise and celebrate success and support in areas for development.

6. A QA Framework will be applicable to both practice educators employed by a local authority/trust or HEI or those who are independent, contracted by the placement provider or the HEI. Independent practice educators can be used by more than one placement provider; it is proposed that each placement provider within the teaching partnership should accept evidence where another agency has completed the QA process of an Independent PE (to ensure independent PEs don't have to repeat the process multiple times).
7. The QA Framework will outline the process for evidencing the ongoing capability of active practice educators on a regular basis, suggested guidance after every two or three students. At least two pieces of evidence could be gathered through the following processes:
 - a. Observation of Practice Educators by a PEPS 2 qualified Practice Educator/ Practice Assessor (suggested observation templates provided in Annex B & C) with feedback framed as a practice/professional development conversation.
 - b. Feedback or reports from standardisation or Practice Assessment Panels from HEIs .
 - c. Feedback from QAPL reports.
 - d. Relevant CPD and professional development activity (example templates Annex D & E – CPD log examples)

This process should be recorded on a simple template (example templates Annex F & G) completed by the PEQA with a short commentary detailing strengths and any areas for further development.

Actions which support quality assurance alongside PE professional development and may aid retention of practice educators:

- Check in's by PE lead with PE and student during a placement.
- Mentoring offered to qualified Pes

B. Maintaining Currency

(ensuring practice educators have recent experience to perform the role effectively)

This applies to all practice educators. If a practice educator has not had a learner for two years, their PE qualification can be considered lapsed. However, a practice educator can maintain currency through other practice education activities (PEPS 2022).

Alternative practice education activities to having a student (suggestions from PEPS 2022 & Teaching Partnership experiences):

- Organising and supporting placements
- Providing teaching and learning opportunities e.g., supporting apprentices/ ASYE
- Observing other experienced practice educators
- Contribution to the writing of assessments and reports for a learner (overseen by a qualified and current practice educator). Supporting the assessment and learning of NQSWs (overseen by a qualified and current practice educator)
- Using these experiences of practice education as evidence to support ongoing registration as a social worker with the regulator through peer learning/ reflective discussion.
- Engaging with BASW training sessions for PEs through the training/ CPD website
- Undertaking the Practice Education Assessor/Mentoring role for a Trainee PE
- Participating in HEI communities of practice
- Attending PE forums
(Example template for recording activities – Annex H)

C. Regaining Currency

(Lapsed practice educators are those who have not been involved in practice education for two years PEPS 2022).

Activities which can be undertaken to refresh their qualification (suggestions from PEPS 2022 & Teaching Partnership experiences):

- Submission of short portfolios (for example; Stoke Template Annex I) to practice education lead/PEQA evidencing how currency is maintained in line with PEPS Values Statements and Domains.
- Undertaking a refresher course provided by employer or learning provider.
- Involvement in decisions undertaken by local/ regional practice assessment panels.
- Exploring opportunities to develop practice within a funded teaching partnership.
- Other methods agreed in consultation with the learning provider and/or employer which could include acting as Assessor for ASYE.

Recording quality assurance outcomes.

Practice educators will be encouraged to log their feedback and any quality assurance outcomes in their own records so they can provide evidence in future quality assurance processes and new roles in new agencies. (Optional “log” see Annex J)

Date of document 4/1/23



Annex A

Key updates in 2022 PEPS refresh relating to Practice Educator Capability:

- New column in the Domain tables to cross reference and map to the specific Value Statements.
- Value statements expanded to include more emphasis on areas such as challenging oppressive practice, working to prevent unjustifiable discrimination or disadvantage in all areas of assessment, supporting learners needs in an anti-discriminatory manner.
- Even for a first placement student, a PEPS 1 trainee should have all formal assessment documents signed off by a Practice Education Assessor (midpoint review, observations, final report).
- Expanded ideas on maintaining currency: Using experiences of Practice Education as evidence to support ongoing registration as a social worker with the regulator, Engaging with BASW training sessions for practice education through Training/CPD section of the website, Undertaking the Practice Educator Mentoring role for a Trainee Practice Educator (PEPS 2022 4.8.1)
- Clarity over responsibility to ensure currency maintained: If an off-site Practice Educator, it is the learning provider and if an employer placing the learner with a Practice Educator it is employer responsibility.





Annex B: Observation of Practice template (*Social work academy - Worcestershire*)

1. Complete in full	
Date:	
Name of Observer:	
Name of Practice Educator:	
Team/service area:	
PE stage 1 or 2?	
Type of practice observation:	
Were objectives of observed session clear?	
Practice Educator skills demonstrated:	Please expand on areas for development:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Emotional intelligence • Listening/Active listening • Current theoretical knowledge • Current legislative knowledge • Knowledge of adult learning • Appropriate support/guidance • Quality of communication • Reflection • Empathy • Transparency 	
Supervision Skills:	Please expand on areas for development:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Model employed • Style employed 	
Please expand where necessary	
Giving Feedback:	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Strengths • Developmental Feedback 	
Please expand where necessary	
Evidence of Practice Educator Domains & links to the Values Statements.	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A – create suitable learning environment 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • B -Teaching & facilitating learning 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • C- Fair & transparent assessment 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • D -Developing Knowledge/CPD 	
Please expand where necessary	
Additional Strengths Observed:	



Annex C: Observation of Practice template (University of Birmingham)

PE Observation of Practice

Date	
Name of Observer	
Role of Observer	
Name of Practice Educator	
Team/Service area:	
PE stage 1 or 2	
<h2>The Observation</h2>	
Type of practice observation e.g. supervision	
PE's Session Objectives i.e. what PE knowledge, skills and values were they seeking to demonstrate and how	
What evidence did you see of the PEs ability to create an inclusive and effective learning environment (domain A)?	
What evidence did you see of the PEs ability to teach, support and facilitate learning and development (domain B)?	
What evidence did you see of the PEs ability to undertake fair, transparent and inclusive assessment of their Learner? (Domain C)	
In what ways did the PE use their resources, knowledge, skills and values to evidence commitment to their own development and the development of PE (Domain D)	
<h2>Feedback</h2>	
What did the learner, the service user, citizen etc. feedback about the performance of the PE following this piece of work / observation?	



The Analysis	
What strengths did you observe and is there a domain, which the PE has evidenced particularly well? Consider standards and values.	
What are the areas for improvement and is there a domain that the PE should give particular attention as they continue their professional development? Consider standards and values.	
The Outcome	
Does this observation provide sufficient evidence for currency?	
If no, what further action needs to be taken to meet the evidence requirements?	

PE Reflections

What does this feedback tell you about your strengths and limitations when setting up a learning environment (domain A), teaching, supervising and supporting (Domain B), assessing fairly (Domain C) and continuing your professional development (Domain D)?

Signed (PE)	
Signed (Observer)	

Annex D

Maintaining Practice Educator currency – Log of student learners

Practice Educators need to keep their qualification current and ideally should take a student every two years.
(BASW PEPS Refresh, 2022 4.8.1)

Please record evidence of your currency here:

Type of Programme	Date placement start	Number of days	University
BA Student	14.9.20	70	Coventry University

Maintaining Practice Educator currency – Alternative Practice Education activities

If a practice educator has not had a student for two years, their PE qualification can be considered lapsed. However, if a practice educator has not had an opportunity to take on a pre-qualifying student, they can maintain currency through other practice education activities, such as;

- i. Organising and supporting placements
- ii. Providing teaching and learning opportunities eg supporting apprentices
- iii. Observing other practice educators
- iv. Contribution to the writing of assessment reports for a learner (overseen by a qualified and current practice educator). Supporting the assessment and learning of NQSW's (overseen by a qualified and current practice educator)
- v. Using these experiences of practice education as evidence to support ongoing registration as a social worker with the regulator.
- vi. Engaging with BASW training sessions for practice education through the Training/ CPD section of the website.
- vii. Undertaking the Practice Educator Mentoring role for a Trainee Practice Educator.

Please record evidence of your Practice Education learning activities / CPD here:

Date	Event
14.9.2020	WMSWTP PE Community of Practice Meeting

Annex E - Template for collating examples of ongoing practice learning (University of Birmingham)

Maintaining Currency: Practice Learning Opportunities Log

Practice Educators need to keep their qualification current and ideally should take a student every two years (BASW PEPS Refresh, 2022 4.8.1). Please record your placements or other practice learning opportunities offered to pre-qualifying and post-qualifying learners, summarise key reflections on your own learning and determine any continuing professional development goals. Bullet points or a short paragraph will suffice.

Type of Programme (e.g. Step Up) or Practice Learning Opportunity (e.g. ASYE)	Placement start date	No. of days	HEI or Agency	Did you receive a QAPL feedback form from your learner?	What did you learn about your PE practice from this placement? <i>Consider your QAPL feedback, knowledge, skills and values and the extent of your anti-oppressive stance in reference to your ability to set up an effective learning environment (domain A), teach, supervise and support (domain B) assess fairly (domain C) support the development of PE (domain D)?</i>	In what ways do you need to develop and how are you going to achieve improvement in your practice? <i>Consider short term and long term goals, ensure any objectives are SMART and identify any support required to help you achieve your goals.</i>
---	----------------------	-------------	---------------	---	--	--



Annex F

Quality Assurance Template for Practice Educators.

To be completed by Practice Education Quality Assurance (PEQA) lead.

Name of Practice Educator:			
Current Role:			
Date of Qualification as a Practice Educator		Level of qualification. PEPS 1 or 2	
Date last student placement finished.		70 days or 100 day. Please state if not completed.	
No. of 70 day students in total since date of qualification/ since date of last Quality Assurance audit.		No. of 100 day students in total since date of qualification/ since date of last Quality Assurance audit.	
Which 2 pieces of evidence are being considered? (see Good Practice Document - principle 6 (a-d) for suggested evidence.)			
PEQA feedback on the evidence informed by the PEPS Domains and Values Statements.			
Identified strengths as a practice educator and any areas for further development.			
Confirmation of ongoing capability or actions recommended.			
Name of PEQA lead completing the form:			
Role in the organisation :			
Date of completion:			



Annex G

Quality Assurance for Practice Education (University of Birmingham)

To be completed by Practice Education Quality Assurance (PEQA) lead

Quality Assurance has been defined as “the collections of policies, procedures, systems and practices internal or external to the organisation designed to achieve, maintain and enhance quality” (Analytic Quality Glossary). It is synonymous with improvement and accountability and as a result, linked closely to managerial, performative practices (Williams, 2016). This tool is designed to establish when and how Practice Educators have ensured continuing professional development and contributions to the field of Practice Learning to meet the requirements of the Practice Educator Professional Standards (BASW, 2022). Findings should be used to support Quality Enhancement efforts not only in relation to the development of the PE workforce, but the organisational PE strategy.

Name of Practice Educator:	
Current Role	
Date of Qualification as a Practice Educator	
Level of qualification PEPS 1 or 2	
Date of last PE QA Audit	

Practice Learning Opportunities (PLO) Overview

Date last practice learning opportunity (PLO) finished.		70 days, 100 days or other. Please state if the learner did not complete the PLO	
No. of 70 day students in total since date of qualification/ since date of last Quality Assurance audit.			



No. of 100 day students in total since date of qualification/ since date of last Quality Assurance audit.	
No. of practice learning opportunities (e.g. ASYE) in total since date of qualification/since date of last Quality Assurance audit	

Evidence of Professional Development

Which 2 pieces of evidence are being considered? (See Good Practice Document - principle 6 (a-d) for suggested evidence.)	
PEQA feedback on the evidence informed by the PEPS Domains and Values Statements.	
Identified strengths as a practice educator and any areas for further development.	
Confirmation of ongoing capability or actions recommended.	

Name of PEQA lead completing the form	
Role in the organisation	
Date of Qualification as a Practice Educator	
Date of completion	

A copy of this form should be provided to the practice educator with an opportunity to discuss the feedback and any professional development plans. The Practice Educator should be invited to comment on this feedback and offer any of their own recommendations for quality enhancement of PE within the agency based upon their experiences.



Annex H – Template to record alternative PE activities (University of Birmingham)

Maintaining Currency: Alternative PE Activities Log

If a practice educator has not had a student for two years, their PE qualification can be considered lapsed. However, if a practice educator has not had an opportunity to take on a pre-qualifying student, they can maintain currency through other practice education activities, such as;

- Organising and supporting placements
- Providing teaching and learning opportunities eg supporting apprentices
- Observing other practice educators
- Contribution to the writing of assessment reports for a learner (overseen by a qualified and current practice educator).
- Supporting the assessment and learning of NQSW's (overseen by a qualified and current practice educator)
- Using these experiences of practice education as evidence to support ongoing registration as a social worker with the regulator.
- Engaging with BASW training sessions for practice education through the Training/ CPD section of the website.
- Undertaking the Practice Educator Mentoring role for a Trainee Practice Educator.

Please record your practice education support or development activities in the table below. Bullet points or a short paragraph will suffice.

Date or Dates e.g. from...to...	Type of PE support, development or other activity. Please provide a brief description.	What did you learn about your PE practice from this placement? <i>Consider your knowledge, skills and values and the extent of your anti-oppressive stance in reference to ability to set up an effective learning environment (domain A), teach, supervise and support (domain B) assess fairly (domain C) support the development of PE (domain D)?</i>	In what ways do you need to develop and how are you going to achieve improvement in your practice? <i>Consider short term and long term goal, ensure any objectives are SMART and identify any support required to help you achieve your goals.</i>

Annex I (adapted from Stoke template)

Practice Educator Portfolio: Regaining Currency

Name:

Maintaining Currency through other Practice Education Activities

Please evidence how you have maintained currency through other Practice Education activities if relevant (max. 500 words).

Other practice education activities that maintain currency(PEPS 2022) include:
 Organising and supporting placements
 Providing teaching and learning opportunities eg supporting apprentices
 Observing other practice educators
 Contribution to the writing of assessment reports for a learner (overseen by a qualified and current practice educator). Supporting the assessment and learning of NQSW's
 Supervising and supporting NQSWs (overseen by a qualified and current practice educator)
 Using these experiences of practice education as evidence to support ongoing registration as a social worker with the regulator.
 Engaging with BASW training sessions for practice educators through Training/ CPD section of the website.
 Undertaking the Practice Education Mentoring role for a Trainee Practice Educator

Domain A - Work with others* to organise an effective learning environment

(A1) Establish an effective collaborative working relationship with learners and manage the power and authority in the educator / assessor role skilfully

(A2) Devise an induction programme that considers learners' needs and their previous experience

(A3) Create reflective spaces for learners' growth and development

*Others in this context refers to work-based supervisors, practice educators, university tutors, people with lived experience of social work, line managers, workplace colleagues, and other professionals and agencies

Please write in this space how you have been meeting this domain with cross reference to the specific Values Statements, PCFs and KSS (see appendix 1 of PEPS refresh 2022) (max. 300 words).



and provide regular reflective supervision	Possible examples to cover include CPD; training/reading; attending PE forums; attending practice assessment panels at universities; devising your own PE development plan; and your most recent experience of having a student on placement.
(A4) Ensure all those involved in supporting the student have clarity and understanding of each other's roles	
(A5) Work openly and cooperatively with others in the planning of learning opportunities and key activities at all stages of learning and assessment	
(A6) Consider student confidentiality and ensure all student information is maintained in a secure environment according to General Data Protection Regulations (GDPR)	
(A7) Contribute to the learning and development of the agency as a learning organisation. This may include encouraging the student to make links with others in the team by working alongside, making presentations and contributing to team resources. It may also include showing leadership by helping to review and improve the provision, policies and procedures of the learning organisation and identify barriers for learners.	



Domain B – Teaching, Facilitating and Supporting Learning and Professional Development in Practice

(B1) Demonstrate informed expertise in their practitioner role, e.g. applied knowledge of contemporary issues in research and relevant policy, legislation and practice

(B2) Using a range of learning methods, including modelling good social work practice. Teach and support the learning of relevant social work knowledge and research, and the integration of theory and research in practice. Knowledge taught should include the powers and duties, and policy and procedures of the agency

(B3) Help students to understand their own learning processes and to develop different models and strategies for critical reflection and analysis

(B4) Discuss and plan with the student the learning and assessment programme, the student's particular needs and capabilities, and how best the learner can derive further

(B5) Make sound reasoned judgements about the level of work the student can be allocated, and the support required to achieve both learning and the work goals

(B6) Demonstrate an understanding of, and critical engagement with, learning theories, to make professional educational judgements

Please write in this space how you have been meeting this domain with cross reference to the specific Values Statements, PCFs and KSS (see appendix 1 of PEPS refresh 2022) (max. 300 words).

Possible examples to cover include CPD; training/reading; attending PE forums; attending practice assessment panels at universities; devising your own PE development plan; and your most recent experience of having a student on placement.



about students' needs and how to meet them	
--	--



Domain C – Manage the fair and transparent assessment of students in practice

(C1) Ensure that holistic assessment decisions are the outcomes of informed, evidence-based judgements, drawing on evidence, which is relevant, valid, reliable and sufficient from a range of sources, including direct observation. Clearly explain the decisions to students.

(C2) Encourage students to self-evaluate and seek service users, carers and work-based colleagues' feedback to develop their performance

(C3) Provide timely, honest and constructive feedback on student performance in an appropriate format. Review student progress throughout the assessment process, identifying strengths and any areas requiring improvement, making clear to students how they may improve to meet the acceptable standard

(C4) Ensure that all assessment decisions, and the supporting evidence, are documented and recorded according to the required standard. Provide holistic assessment reports which demonstrate clear evidence for decisions. Demonstrate ability to work well with others in the assessment process, particularly if learner's practice is marginal or failing

(C5) Engage students in the design, planning and implementation of methods to assess students'

Please write in this space how you have been meeting this domain with cross reference to the specific Values Statements, PCFs and KSS (see appendix 1 of PEPS refresh 2022 (max. 300 words).

Possible examples to cover include CPD; training/reading; attending PE forums; attending practice assessment panels at universities; devising your own PE development plan; and your most recent experience of having a student on placement.



performance against the appropriate standards	
(C6) Extend the development of all students including those who already have strong skills or are experiencing difficulties. Ensure that disagreements about assessment judgements and complaints made about the assessment process are managed in accordance with agreed procedures	



Domain D – Developing knowledge and continuing performance as a practice educator

(D1) Seek feedback from students on their experience of being assessed and the consequences of the assessment programme for them. Incorporate into future assessment activity.

(D2) Show understanding of, and the ability to apply, models and theories of supervision, knowledge and research on assessment, teaching and learning, and critical reflection

(D3) Establish and maintain effective resources for their own support and supervision in respect of their role in workplace learning. Demonstrate the ability to consult and work with others in contentious and challenging contexts such as dealing with struggling students and formal appeals and complaints

(D4) Demonstrate critical reflection on their own development as practice educators, including the use of feedback from direct observations, colleagues and HEIs tutors and other assessment sources management and improvement

(D5) Apply learning to subsequent practice education experience using a range of methods

(D6) Contribute to the development of the agency as a learning organisation by providing information and advice from their

Please write in this space how you have been meeting this domain with cross reference to the specific Values Statements, PCFs and KSS (see appendix 1 of PEPS refresh 2022 (max. 300 words).

Possible examples to cover include CPD; training/reading; attending PE forums; attending practice assessment panels at universities; devising your own PE development plan; and your most recent experience of having a student on placement.



experience on the quality and effectiveness of placement learning	
(D7) Demonstrate an ability to deepen and extend their ability and expertise as a practice educator. This may also include the transfer of practice educator skills, knowledge and values to new roles in mentoring, supervision, teaching and/or assessment and show leadership in workplace learning	
(D8) Show ability to critique and apply models and theories of supervision, and knowledge and research on assessment, teaching and learning, critical reflection and other relevant knowledge. Contribute to the extension of that knowledge through their expertise and research. Promote the profile of the practice educator as playing a key role in the development of excellent early career practitioners	

Name	
Date	
Signature	

To Be Completed by Practice Educator Assessor

I hereby confirm that the practice educator has demonstrated the four practice educator professional domains and is approved for student placements.

Name	
Date	
Signature	

Annex J PE Quality Assurance Log Template (University of Birmingham)

Quality Assurance Log

Practice Educators may use this template to log each time they experience the quality assurance process. The log should be chronological and continuous so that the record is maintained even where the PE moves between agencies.

Date of QA Audit	Name of Agency	Name of PEQA Auditor	Outcome <i>e.g. capability sufficient/insufficient, currency confirmed</i>